The Northern Region Sustainable Recreation, Heritage, Wilderness (RHW) Strategy

2015-2020

August 3, 2015

Northern Region
Sustainable Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness (RHW) Strategy

August, 2015

We approve and support the implementation of the Northern Region's Sustainable RHW Strategy. Will commit to working together to: move toward the stated vision; maintain and/or enhance the Region's RHW Niche; and assist in implementing priority actions outlined under the Focus Areas and Program-specific Goals.

Leanne Marten
Regional Forester
Northern Region

Dave Schmid
Deputy Regional Forester
Northern Region

Jane Darnell
Deputy Regional Forester
Northern Region

Melany Glossa
Forest Supervisor
Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest

Chris Savage
Forest Supervisor
Kootenai National Forest

Julie King
Forest Supervisor
Bitterroot National Forest

Bill Avey
Forest Supervisor
Lewis & Clark – Helena National Forests

Mary Farnsworth
Forest Supervisor
Idaho Panhandle National Forests

Tim Garcia
Forest Supervisor
Lolo National Forest

Chip Weber
Forest Supervisor
Flathead National Forest

Cheryl Probert
Forest Supervisor
Nez Perce - Clearwater National Forests

Mary Erickson
Forest Supervisor
Custer-Gallatin National Forest

Dennis Neitzke
Grasslands Supervisor
Dakota Prairie National Grasslands

Table of Contents

Purpose and Intent of the Strategy 1

Why We Need a Strategy 2

- Current State of Affairs 2
- Summary of Existing Conditions and Trends 4
- Public Benefits 5

What We're Shooting For 7

- Our Vision 7
- Our Regional RHW Niche 7
- Our Settings 8

What We Plan To Do 9

- Four Regional Areas of Focus 9
  - Identity & Visibility 9
  - Prioritizing and Integrating Work 12
  - Workforce 14
  - Volunteers, Youth and Partnerships 16
- Program-Specific Goals and Actions 17
  - Developed Recreation 17
  - Dispersed Recreation 18
  - Heritage Program 20
  - Interpretation and Conservation Education 22
  - Recreation Special Uses 23
  - Scenery Resource 25
  - Trails 26
  - Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness 27
  - Wild and Scenic Rivers 29

APPENDICES 34

- A. Strategy Development Process 35
- B. Issues that Drove the Development of the 4 Focus Areas 37
- C. Program-Specific Issues and Additional Actions 40
- D. Context and Linkages to broader National and Regional Direction and Guidance 48
- E. References 50

Table 1 Implementation Timeline 31

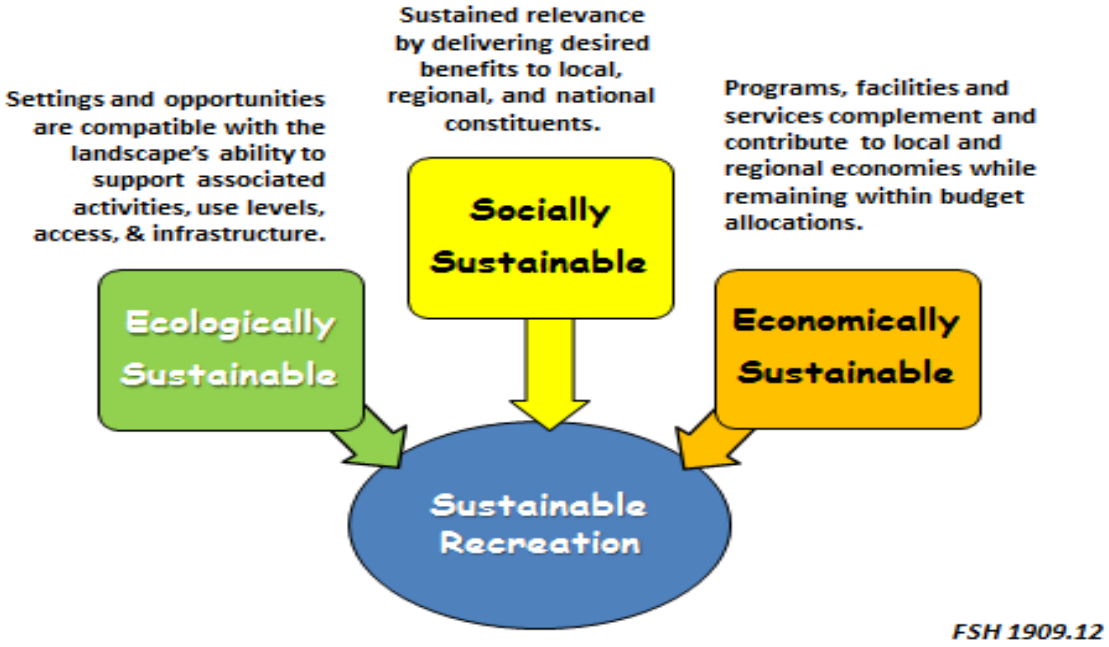
Table 2 R1 Sustainable RHW Strategy and Linkages to the USFS Strategic Plan 49

Purpose and Intent of the Strategy

The Northern Region Sustainable Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness (RHW) Strategy provides direction and guidance for the promotion, integration, and management of sustainable recreation, heritage, and wilderness programs. Regional, unit, and district employees worked together in developing the vision, areas of focus, and program-specific goals, objectives, and actions. Representatives from other program areas (planning, engineering, vegetation, law enforcement, public affairs, etc.) also engaged in the process to ensure integration with other resource program objectives and initiatives. **The intent of this strategy is not to identify additional work, but instead, to focus our limited workforce and budget on actions that: address common issues and needs; create long term efficiencies for the field; and ensure sustainable program delivery to the public.**

National guidance and direction (reference appendix D) served as our foundation. The term "sustainable recreation" is defined in the 2012 Planning Rule and in the 1900 directives.

Sustainable Recreation is defined as:
the set of recreation settings and opportunities on the National Forest System that is ecologically, economically, and socially sustainable for present and future generations. (36 CFR 219.19)



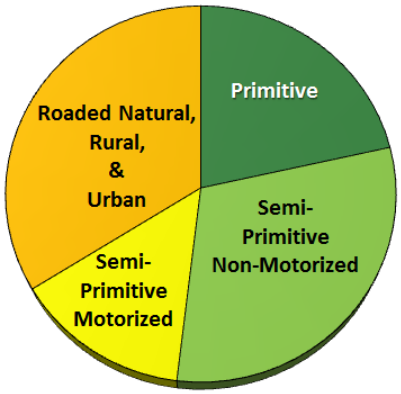
The Region's Sustainable RHW Strategy will be used to:

- Communicate and market (internally and externally) the Region's RHW programs and benefits;
- Integrate and prioritize regional RHW program needs and associated work;
- Guide future management decisions and actions;
- Align and right size our infrastructure to complement our niche and move toward our vision;
- Assess current budget allocations and organizational structures; and
- Hold ourselves accountable by monitoring implementation and effectiveness of our actions.

Why We Need a Strategy

Current State of Affairs

The Region manages over 25 million acres. Approximately ½ of our settings offer motorized opportunities and ½ offer non-motorized opportunities. Within these settings, diverse opportunities and services are delivered through multiple RHW programs including: Developed Recreation; Dispersed Recreation; Heritage; Interpretation and Conservation Education; Recreation Special Uses; Scenery; Trails; Wilderness; and Wild and Scenic Rivers. Recognizing there is a need to integrate the planning and management of these programs, there are also program-specific issues that require our attention. The following pages point out some of the existing conditions and issues within each program.



R1
Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Settings

Developed Recreation

We manage 1,658 developed recreation sites
O&M costs are > $10 million/year.
Deferred maintenance (DM) is > $25 million (not including road-related DM).
ZERO CIP funding is available to address DM over the next several years.

Dispersed Recreation

The majority of our use is dispersed.
4 of 5 top activities (hiking, hunting, viewing scenery & fishing) are dispersed in nature.
We have > 10,000 dispersed recreation sites.
> ½ of our dispersed sites exhibit resource damage.
There is no national or regional program direction/guidance

Heritage Program

We have over 22,000 recorded cultural resources. Compliance workloads hinder our ability to focus on quality program delivery and realizing associated benefits.

Interpretation and Education

Although recognized as a critical tool to manage visitor behavior and instill a conservation ethic, there is inadequate focus or dedicated funding for program delivery.

Recreation Special Uses

We administer 1,820 recreation special use permits.
Demands, workloads, and work complexity continue to increase.
Our workforce capacity, skills, and funding continue to decrease.

Scenery

Scenery is identified as the most important aspect of visitor experience in the Northern Region.
Scenery is also a primary reason people choose to live here.
Funding and workloads are focused on mitigation rather than enhancement or proactive management.

Trails

The Region has over 28,000 miles of trail, including several National Scenic and Historic Trails.
Demands and deferred maintenance continue to increase while budgets decrease.
Workforce skills are also on the decline.

Wilderness

The Region manages 15 designated Wilderness Areas, totaling 5 million acres.

Although our Wilderness Areas currently meet National quality standards, continued Regional focus is necessary to ensure sustained partnerships and quality conditions on the ground.

Wild and Scenic Rivers

We have 5 Wild & Scenic Rivers.

Most do not have management plans completed.

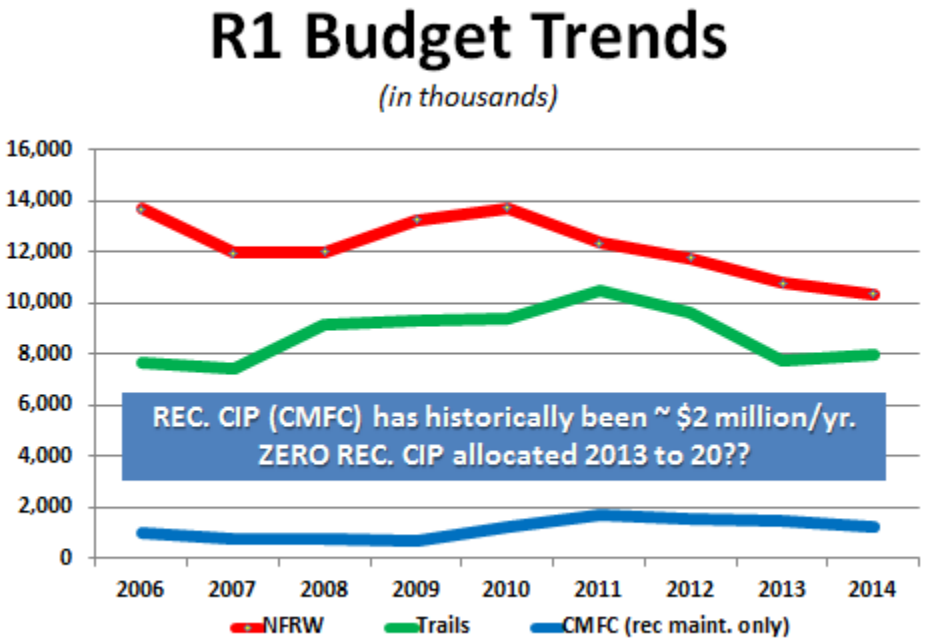
Summary of Existing Conditions and Trends

On the rise

- Urban interface areas are growing and resulting in increased use and more diverse **demands**.
- Public **interest in access and the freedom to explore** our forests continues to increase.
- Technology and recreation "toys" continue to evolve, often creating new management challenges.
- **Conflicts** between users groups are increasing.
- The **complexity** of recreation programs and **necessary skills** to manage them continue to increase.
- Environmental **impacts** from recreation use are increasing.
- **Costs** continue to increase.

On the decline

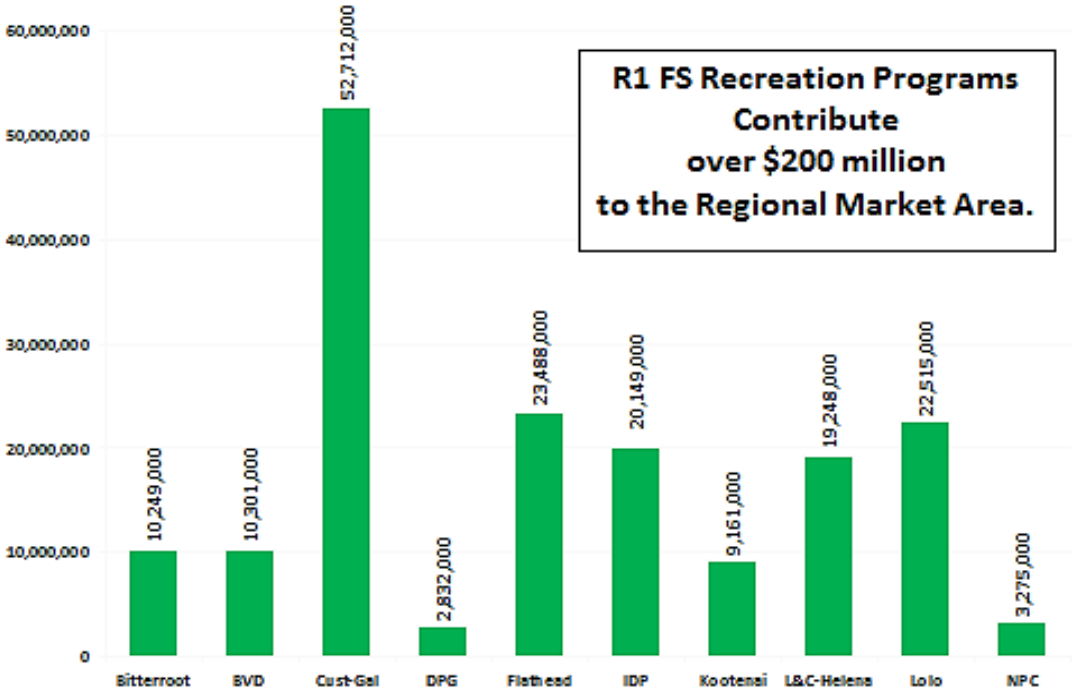
- **Budgets** have, and continue to decline.
- The **condition** of our infrastructure is declining.
- Recreation management **skills and capacity** are diminishing.



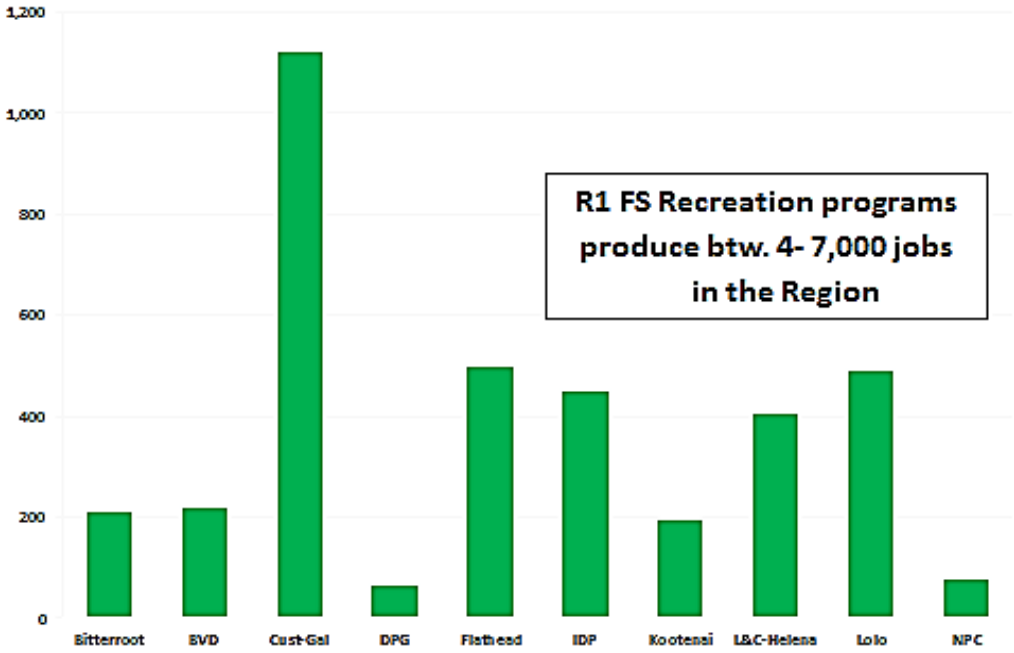
While demands, program complexity, skill requirements, resource impacts and costs are all on the rise, our financial and workforce capacity are on the decline. Despite a highly dedicated workforce, close community connections, strong partnerships, and successful leveraging, recreation managers are unable to meet growing demands or ensure the protection of our cultural and natural resources. To ensure quality and sustainable RHW settings and opportunities for future generations, we must set a different course for the future.

Public Benefits

Recreation is the Agency's single largest contributor to the economy by contributing over 13 billion dollars to the GDP and producing more jobs than any other FS program. The Northern Region's RHW programs are no exception.

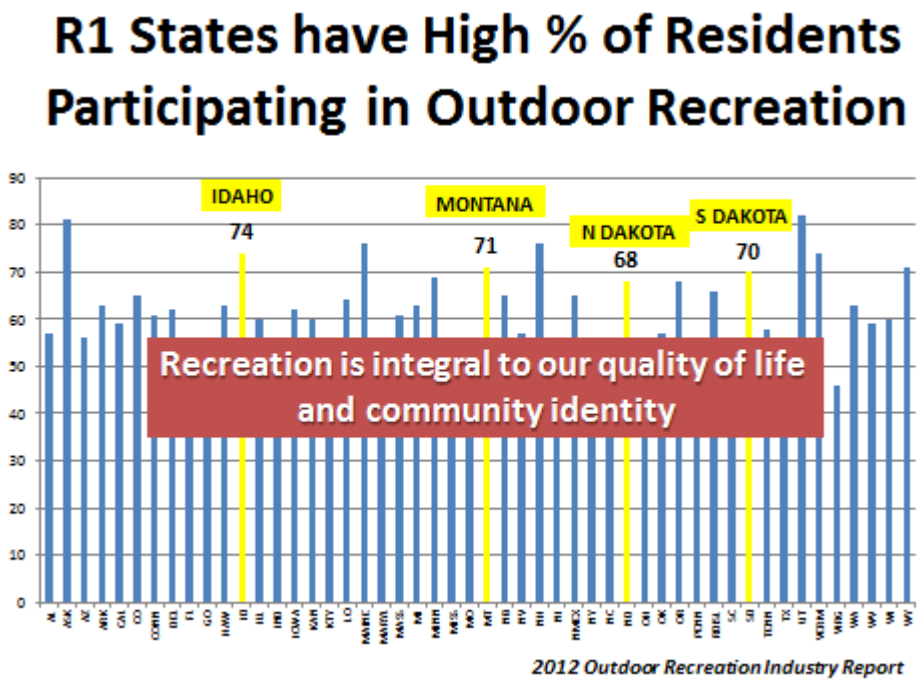


NFS Economics Web Site, 2012 Data, Susan Winter: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/economic_contribution/index.shtml



NFS Economics Web Site, 2012 Data, Susan Winter: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/economic_contribution/index.shtml
Krista Gebert, Regional Economist, 2012 assessment

In addition to economic benefits, RHW programs in the Region are **deeply rooted in the way of life for local residents**. We serve as community backdrops and backyards for daily recreation opportunities.

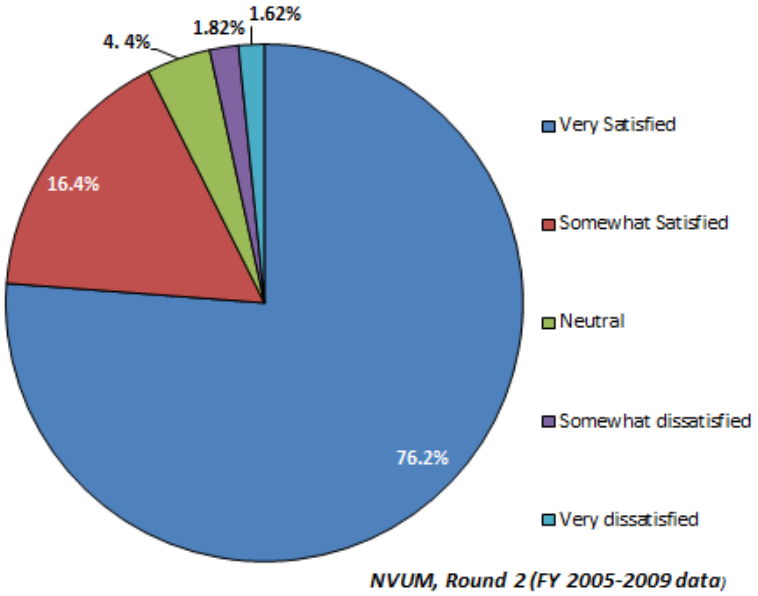


The majority of our visitors are local

- **Over 63% of our visitors travel less than 50 miles**
- **80% travel less than 100 miles**

Only a few states: Utah, Alaska, Maine, New Hampshire have higher participation rates than states in our Region. The National Average of all States is 60% participating in recreation.

Over ¾ of the Region's visitors are "very satisfied" with their overall recreation visit.



As a society we continue to become increasingly aware of the benefits of outdoor experiences on both physical and mental health. The role of RHW programs and services has great potential to connect people with the values of their great outdoors, where they reside. More than providing outdoor destinations for visitors, RHW is the Region's most effective program in promoting, connecting with, and growing future stewards of NFS lands.

What We're Shooting For

Our Vision

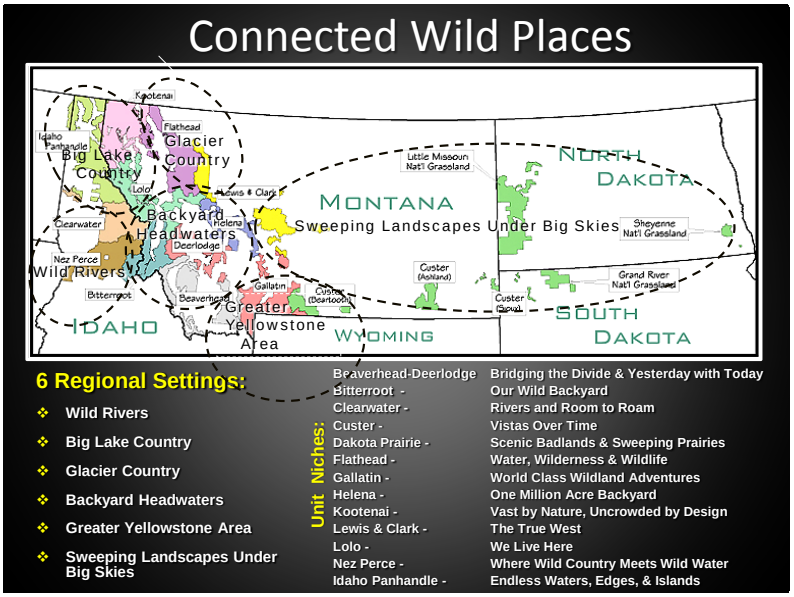
The Northern Region's incredible wildland settings provide year-round, life enhancing recreation opportunities. We remain relevant, resilient and **sustainable** by continuing to partner with our rural, tribal, and changing communities. We preserve strong connections to our rich heritage and western traditions while anticipating, planning for, and embracing the future.

Our Regional RHW Niche

Wildlands connect with and complement vast expanses of rural settings and growing communities. Majestic scenery, clean water, and unique, charismatic wildlife that attracted the Region's first inhabitants continue to draw people seeking a high quality of life. The rich, colorful, and well preserved American Indian and Euro American heritage of the Region, as reflected in living cultural traditions, historic buildings, and thousands of archeological sites; is accessible and protected for the benefit of future generations.

Hunting, fishing and gathering products, that were once life sustaining are now life enhancing. The Region is a leader in facilitating collaboration between user groups, other public and private recreation providers, and communities. This protects open space and key access to the Region that is vital to the delivery of quality, sustainable, recreation services. We remain relevant and responsive to communities, visitors, and changing climate. Outfitter guides are an important connection to new and changing visitors. High value, low impact visitation through geo-tourism, and trail-based recreation, serve to link communities with wildlands and are regional in focus.

Our Settings



- **Big Lake Country** – A combination of water, mountains, and precipitation create large natural lakes that lie within steep timbered shorelines, creating a generous mix of habitat for big game species and fish. Where mining once boomed, populations now boom – eager for the nearby outdoor adventure. Day use hiking and water based activities for growing and diverse populations are the focus.
- **Wild Rivers –** Wild, roaring rivers flow through this primitive setting and support an incredible fishery, including salmon and steelhead. Visitors immerse themselves in an untamed environment that offers quiet solitude. Quality river-based opportunities that protect and enhance riparian zones are the focus.
- **Glacier Country –** Home to glaciated peaks, pristine forests, rugged mountains, alpine lakes, flower-filled meadows, and big game. It is the southern end of the Canadian Rockies and part of a larger intact eco-system. This *Crown of the Continent* is a paradise for national and international visitors seeking wilderness, solitude and spectacular scenery. The rugged terrain confines communities to valleys and river corridors. Road, river, and trail based opportunities compliment National Park offerings and are the focus of this sub-region.
- **Backyard Headwaters –** This area connects Montana communities with encompassing wildlands and serves as a jumping off point to more remote settings. It links ice (Glacier) to the north and fire (Yellowstone) to the south. Rivers and lakes offer quick access to tremendous blue ribbon fisheries. Both day use hiking and fishing for urban populations are the focus.
- **Greater Yellowstone Area –** Here, the earth's temperature nears the surface creating unique geothermal features such as geysers, mud pots, and hot springs. Major rivers with outstanding fisheries and intact habitats supporting ample populations of wildlife contribute to the uniqueness of Yellowstone country. The area's rich history of past lifestyles includes Native Americans, mining and ranching. Year-round recreation opportunities that accommodate extreme sports and younger visitors while complimenting National Park offerings are a focus.
- **Sweeping Landscapes under Big Skies –** Wide open spaces with multi colored buttes, tablelands, and gorges of the Badlands transition to remnant tall grass prairie. Mountain islands interrupt the sea of grasses and rich rural settings are dotted with wildlife refuges. Thousands of birds breed in the Prairie Pot Hole Region and darken the skies of the central flyway each fall and spring. Cattle and wildlife now graze where buffalo and dinosaurs once roamed. Routes once traveled by Native Americans and Lewis & Clark continue to interest and inspire today's visitors in the land where legends live on. Highlighting the area's rich western heritage and establishing community interest in the vast recreation opportunities are emphasized.

What We Plan To Do

Four Regional Areas of Focus

There are four areas of focus that surfaced repeatedly during the development of the R1 RHW strategy. **They represent issues and needs that transcend individual RHW programs and are critical to the sustainability of the Region's RHW program as a whole.**

The areas of focus include: RHW Identity and Visibility; Prioritizing and Integrating Work; Workforce Development; and Partnerships. **These four areas of focus will serve as the core set of work priorities for Regional program managers to tackle collectively.**

1) Identity & Visibility

WHY- Issue Statement:

Recreation, Heritage, and Wilderness is how most people relate to and interact with the Forests and Grasslands of the Northern Region. In addition, the socio-economic benefits derived from our RHW programs are significant. Despite the compelling statistics about the benefits of our programs and continued public interest, our budget, workforce, infrastructure, and services continue to decline. Without the support of our constituents and increased internal focus, the future of the Region's RHW programs is at risk.

What – Our Goal:

The sustainability of the Region's RHW programs are integral to our budgeting processes, planning efforts, management decisions, workforce development, and monitoring priorities. Our messaging promotes relevance to both internal and external audiences by focusing on the benefits derived from quality program delivery. RHW has a strong voice 'at the table' and is well integrated with other resource objectives. There is internal and external understanding and support of our programs and the complexities of managing people while protecting the incredible natural and cultural resources of our landscapes.

Objectives:

- Build internal awareness and support for the delivery of quality RHW programs.
- Build a strong, persuasive constituency among partners, users groups and forest visitors to advocate for and market the importance of RHW settings, programs and services.
- Deliver consistent messaging to garner public support to assist in shifting internal focus.
- Better utilize interpretation and conservation education to build a conservation ethic among forest visitors.
- Training is integrated across RHW programs, as well as with other resource values, to better understand the interconnections and dependency upon one another to achieve sustainability.

- Performance measures serve to ensure accountability toward meeting the Region's Sustainable RHW Strategy's goals and objectives, and implementing priority actions.
- The Regional Leadership Council (RLC) is engaged with RHW programs and integrates them with other program priorities.
- Rewards and recognition is given to integrated projects and processes that achieve sustainability objectives.

HOW: Priority Actions:

1) Develop an Internal Communication Plan - Work with PGR/PAOs to create a consistent message for recreation practitioners to use to define what RHW programs are, how programs affect the public, and interact with other resources so it resonates with line officers and program managers/directors. Plan will include messages that restoration includes more than just vegetation; but addresses resilient communities (economy) and RHW programs should be fully integrated with other resource programs and that they hold equal weight in planning process, management decisions, and funding priorities related to targets and projects.

Key messages

- Region 1 is a restoration ***AND*** RHW Region- describe how we are this
- Restoration = resilient communities (tie to resilient ecosystems)
- RHW benefits are equally, if not more important drivers of local economies, compared to commodity based activities.

2) Develop and Implement an External (Public) Communication Plan to highlight opportunities and public benefits that are unique to Region 1. It is critical that we build relevancy with public, and in turn build a constituency to help advocate for funding, support, and program focus.

Key messages-

- R1 RHW programs provide significant socio-economic benefits to local, state, and regional communities and economies. Note: Quantify whenever possible.
- R1 RHW programs serve as the portal through which visitors connect to NFS lands. This builds awareness, understanding, stewardship, and support for managing and protecting the incredible natural and cultural resources of the Region.
- R1 RHW programs serve to enhance daily life. We are an integral part of the 'way of life' of residents and critical to keeping youth connected to nature.
- Help raise the profile of RHW programs to FS leadership and facilitate a shift in focus and look to the future. Help RHW become a *driver* rather than a *backseat passenger*.

Create a 'tool box' to deliver key messages to the public - The intent is to modernize our delivery systems to more effectively connect with and engage our public. In doing so, we will build a broader constituency to advocate for more internal focus on delivering quality and sustainable RHW settings, opportunities, programs, and services.

- Work with National Forest Foundation to help create and provide social networking websites and other virtual media sources, to deliver key messages.
- Improve our websites to provide accurate, relevant, and up-to-date information to the public
- Align our delivery system to best reach target audiences for specific messages. This may require assistance outside the agency.

- Consider creating and implementing various 'marketing' efforts that target a certain group, program, or important issues. Look to surrounding States/Regions that have 'success' stories with promoting USFS tourism-related activities.
- Focus interpretation and conservation education materials to help build a conservation ethic among users.
- Work with local tourism agencies and 'chambers of commerce' to share messaging about benefits of RHW programs and services. Highlight and promote 'icons', destinations, and R1 Special places, similar to National Parks.

Measures:

- ✓ Communication plans are in place
- ✓ Websites and social media are used in delivering key RHW messages.
- ✓ Local, State, and Regional marketing efforts include the Region's RHW opportunities, benefits, and special places.
- ✓ Increased public advocacy for our programs
- ✓ Increased internal attention and funding to RHW programs

2) Prioritizing, Integrating and Funding Work

WHY – Issue Statement: The planning and management of the Region's RHW programs continue to emphasize our historic status-quo. Despite declining budgets and workforce, increased program complexity, and changing public needs, we have attempted to do the same (and often more) work with less resources. Not surprisingly, this has resulted in a decline in program quality, employee morale, and service to the public. Although our ingenuity, dedication, and aggressive harnessing of partners and volunteers has helped, we are no longer able to do everything we've done historically…it's simply not sustainable. We need to take a closer look at *what* work we're doing, and *how* we're funding and accomplishing that work to ensure we can make the shift from historic and reactive management to management that sets a course for a sustainable future.

WHAT – Our Goal:

RHW programs are critical and integral to achieving the Region's priorities. Our programs are recognized as contributing to the protection and enhancement of ecological conditions, while providing essential socio-economic benefits.

Objectives:

- A cohesive set of RHW work priorities is defined in out-year budget direction that positions us to integrate with other programs (roads, facilities, IM&A, Planning, Wildlife, Watershed, etc.) and emphasis areas (restoration, climate change adaptation, etc.).
- Funding is integrated to ensure RHW benefits and outcomes are considered in our planning efforts and result from our actions.
- RHW direction and guidance is part of each Forest Plan and is integral to achieving ecological, social, and economic sustainability.
- RHW specialists are valued members of landscape and project-level IDTs to help define the *why (*Purpose and Need*), where, and what* (Proposed Action) of restoration and other related projects across the region.

HOW – Priority Actions:

1) Annually define out-year priorities that integrate RHW programs with one another.

RHW staff shall meet annually to integrate program-specific direction and develop an integrated set of RHW priorities for out-year budget planning. The FS Strategic Plan (2015-2020), National RHW emphasis areas, RF priorities, and the R1 Sustainable Recreation Strategy shall be considered when weighing benefits, identifying areas of needed integration and prioritizing Regional RHW direction and guidance.

Measures:

- ✓ Integrated RHW program direction in out-year budget direction

2) RHW program priorities are integrated with other resource programs and objectives as part of the Regional out-year budget process.

The RHW director will work with other Regional directors to integrate priorities and funding to best achieve national and regional priorities. The FS Strategic Plan (2015-2020), National emphasis areas, and RF priorities shall be used to evaluate competing priorities and establish a collective set of priorities and associated mix of BLIs to accomplish. Priorities shall be supported by and tier to Regional scale analyses such as: the Integrated Restoration and Protection Strategy (IRPS), the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, the Regional Inventory and Monitoring Framework, the Regional Beetle Strategy, the Regional Investment Strategy, Regional Transportation System Prioritizations via MAP 21, the Regional Facilities Assessment, the Watershed Condition Framework, etc.

Measures:

- ✓ Out-year budget direction that includes RHW in achieving integrated Regional priorities.

3) Continue to build and refine Regional RHW data sets to bring RHW to the table during planning, create efficiencies at the Forest and District levels, facilitate integration with other resource values, and inform decisions. Data shall:

- Focus on answering key management questions and needs;
- Link to broader scale efforts such as the National IM&A Framework and the Regional Broad Scale Monitoring Strategy;
- Be housed in corporate data systems to ensure data is accessible;
- Include lat/long information and/or GPS points to ensure information can be displayed spatially to facilitate integration at multiple scales.

A) Complete remaining data gaps (identified by RHW staff in 2008): Tasks include:

- Complete dispersed recreation site inventory (funded through 2016)
- Populate SUDS with corrected Recreation Residences lat/longs
- Compile a Regional layer of all registered cultural/historic sites and landscapes

B) Complete an Integrated RHW Information Needs Assessment to identify data gaps critical to: compliance with National and regional policy, direction, and guidance (2012 Planning Rule and 1900 directives, National and R1 Monitoring Frameworks, Climate Change Vulnerability Assessments/Adaptive Management Strategies, R1 Integrated Restoration and Protection Strategy, Travel and Transportation Planning); measuring targets accomplishment: reporting; and other data needs based on contemporary management questions.

Measures:

- ✓ RHW programs are integrated with Regional strategies, assessments, and work priorities.
- ✓ Forest Plans contains direction for RHW programs that is integrated, promotes sustainability (ecological, social and economic), and provides sideboards to ensure subsequent projects are planned and implemented to maintain/move toward a sustainable recreation program at the Forest level.
- ✓ Project-level planning includes RHW at the table early in the process and where appropriate, includes RHW actions and outcomes that contribute to meeting other resource objectives.
- ✓ RHW data is up to date, responsive to key management questions, and accessible in our corporate systems.

3) Workforce

WHY – Issue Statement: RHW programs continue to be challenged by the lack of an adequately-sized or trained workforce. This long-standing issue has accelerated in this era of right-sizing, declining budgets, and retirements. Simply put, there are not enough people to do all of the required work- nor is there always the right combination of skills. This situation has cascaded into both diminished training opportunities and mentoring of new RHW employees. While RHW programs continue to meet most program targets in a variety of creative ways, this situation has created a stressed, sometimes demoralized workforce.

RHW programs are a primary draw to national forests and grasslands; yet RHW staffing does not reflect this deep public interest or priority. We need to take a closer look at how we are staffed to meet current and future public needs and demands in RHW programs in order to insure program delivery, resiliency, quality and relevancy.

WHAT – Our Goal: Our goal is to build and sustain a vibrant and creative RHW workforce that is well trained, flexible and resilient enough to deliver quality and relevant programs and products while riding out the inevitable budgetary, FTE and other federal cycles.

Objectives:

- RHW staffing is commensurate with the professional and technician work load.
- RHW programs develop and retain PFT training and journey-level positions (i.e., create staffing "understory" and career paths).
- RHW skills are a priority for Pathways recruitment and placement is the Northern Region.
- RHW training and retention of core competencies is a Northern Region priority.
- The importance of timely hiring of RHW seasonal employees is recognized and given higher priority in the national E-Tracker system and regional protocols.
- The Region will seek to "integrate" positions in RHW programs, as appropriate, to maximum FTE and workload efficiencies.
- The Region will acknowledge and celebrate RHW program and workforce accomplishments and successes to encourage recruitment, sustain our workforce, and build morale.

HOW - Priority Actions

1) **Conduct a Workforce Assessment**
    a. Coordinate across unit boundaries to define priority work, holes that need to be filled, and/or sharing opportunities. Identify efficiencies-deficiencies based on combined unit organization charts.
    b. Seek ways to combine RHW jobs where it is appropriate and functionally possible (i.e., ½ Recreation, ½ Heritage or Wilderness).

2) Develop a Recruitment Strategy

a. Broaden PFT recruitment by flying interdisciplinary job descriptions (101, 401, 807); and recruit at the technician, journey and professional levels to create a stronger PFT workforce and career ladder.
b. Enlist Universities to advise Recreation Forestry (and other) students to take biophysical classes to qualify in 401 series.
c. Align RO Pathways program to recruit, hire and retain students based on regional needs, per item a. above.
d. Develop a Regional RHW TOS pool for trainee positions (outside of Pathways).
e. Coordinate with Human Resources to assure that RHW seasonal hiring needs are recognized and given higher priority.

3) Celebrate, Integrate, Train and Mentor RHW workforce

a. Ensure that all RHW employee position descriptions, qualifications, performance measures, and training plans are current and relevant to their duties.
b. Create or reinstitute new employee training and mentoring programs, with the assistance of HR as appropriate.
c. Actively seek RHW employees for Middle Leadership or other leadership programs to provide both a better individual understanding of the agency and to advance RHW participation in agency leadership.
d. Provide and/or develop integrated training for RHW programs.
e. Invest in employee training to ensure job competency, proficiency and relevancy (beyond the 1-week Northern Region University).
f. Provide opportunities for work and job sharing or details among RHW programs in order to "cross pollinate" and expand understanding and knowledge (get out of program silos). Monitor and evaluate employee collateral duties and performance (i.e., Heritage and Tribal Liaison) to ensure that both responsibilities are being fulfilled or that adjustments are being made.
g. Conduct RHW program activity reviews periodically to evaluate program leadership and workforce performance, particularly for newly combined or paired-shared units.
h. Include RHW workforce successes in annual upward accomplishment reporting and related media to broaden agency appreciation and build employee morale.
i. Identify common workforce concerns (and potential work and moral issues) at regional RHW meetings and develop plans and actions to address them, including sharing with unit and regional leadership.

Measures:

- ✓ RHW employee skills are commensurate with priority work needs.
- ✓ RHW employees and partners are able to accomplish priority work
- ✓ RHW employees feel valued and are integral to the planning and management of R1 landscapes and resources.

4) Partnerships, Volunteers and Youth

WHY – issue statement: At the National and Department level, engaging youth, volunteers and partners is a continuing priority tied to the President's America's Great Outdoors Initiative, 21CSC, USDA Cultural Transformation, Forest Service Strategic Plan, and Forest Service's new National Youth Strategy. In this region, volunteers, youth, service and stewardship partners contributed over 240,000 hours of service in FY13, at a value of over $7.5 million dollars. Intended to enhance but not replace field capacity, the volunteer, youth and partner program continues to play a vital role in engaging and creating citizen stewards, providing meaningful employment opportunities, and vibrant connections to National Forest System Lands. Eighty-four percent (84%) of the region's volunteer, youth and stewardship partner program involves recreation, wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers, trails and heritage projects. There will be continued emphasis at the national level to expand these efforts to engage all citizens in the stewardship of and care for their public lands.

WHAT – Our Goal:

The R1 Sustainable RHW strategy and program of work is supported by a broad array of strategic partnerships that engage volunteers, youth, veterans and stewardship organizations, increase diversity of participants, provide public land stewardship opportunities for all citizens, promote relevancy, and add capacity and resources to help maintain, protect and provide outstanding RHW settings and opportunities region wide.

Objectives:

- The Region's partnership strategy is integrated and tied to priority RHW work.
- The "right" partners help accomplish the "right" work.
- Our field capacity increases by addressing issues pertaining to the management of partners.
- The field has tools to increase quality delivery of RHW programs and create efficiencies.

HOW - Priority Actions:

1) Conduct an initial assessment with field units to identify current partners as well as partners that are needed to accomplish priority work. As part of assessment, identify new partners, including consideration of a larger partner organization, that could provide additional capacity/expertise with management of smaller partner and/or volunteer organizations.

2) Develop a partnership strategy that links the right partners to the right work and includes a sustainable funding framework/model.

3) Develop Tools and training to assist the field

- Compile and/or develop Best Management Practices to assist the field in managing a wide array of partnerships (volunteers, challenge cost share and other partner organizations).
- Compile and/or develop trainings around Best Management Practices

Measures:

- ✓ Regional tools are used and create efficiencies in the field.
- ✓ Partnerships are long lasting and focused on priority work.

Program-Specific Goals and Actions

Introduction: This section is arranged by the 9 RHW program areas (Developed Recreation, Dispersed Recreation, Heritage, Interpretation and Conservation Education, Recreation Special Uses, Scenery, Trails, Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness, and Wild and Scenic Rivers). A goal, objective(s), top 3 actions, and measures are identified for each. The program-specific goals are grounded in the both the R1 RHW vision and niche. Objectives and actions are responsive to the program-specific goal, while also addressing the issues (see Appendix C) that surfaced throughout the development of the strategy. Priority actions contained in this section are listed in the implementation timeline. Additional actions (beyond the top 3) are captured in Appendix C for future reference.

Developed Recreation

Goal: Quality, sustainable developed recreation facilities are strategically placed to protect cultural and natural resources, safely meet user demands, accommodate concentrations of use, implement travel planning, and provide access to adjacent wildland settings.

Objective: Address outdated fees and our CIP process to reduce our deferred maintenance and facilitate program sustainability.

Priority Actions:

1) Develop a Regional Fee Strategy and provide training. The strategy (fee process) will be consistent with national direction, while providing Regional guidance to help streamline the process and create regional efficiencies.

Measures: Regionally developed and delivered training and guidance on fees.
# of sites with successfully implemented fee proposals.

2) "Refresh" unit RFA efforts to assess current DM and O&M needs and align site-specific actions with current and projected funding. Review past Recreation Facility Analysis (RFA) efforts (recommendations and implementation status), identify change conditions (above fee guidance, R1 CIP program status, new partnerships, visitor use, resource conditions, current and projected budgets, revised Forest Plan direction, etc.) and where warranted, "refresh" unit-specific RFA recommendations. Provide timely public information about recommendations and timeframes for implementation.

Measures: # of revised RFA efforts – or – confirmation that existing RFA recommendations are still valid.

3) Coordinate, prioritize, and implement fee proposals and identify future CIP priorities. Prioritize proposals based on workload and sustainable recreation goals. Where fees are proposed, consider developing a 'fee schedule' concept where fee increases are implemented in steps. Review and refine Regional CIP process to align with revised National criteria and better address recreation needs at the Regional level.

Measures: Total DM by unit
Reduced gap between O&M costs and available budget/revenue.

Dispersed Recreation

Goal:

Quality, sustainable, dispersed recreation settings and opportunities are an emphasis for the Region and actively managed to meet demands for dispersed recreation activities while protecting the wildland character and cultural and natural resources of the Region.

Objectives:

- Improve internal and external understanding of dispersed recreation.
- Helpful management direction and guidance is available to the field.
- User-groups are our partners in managing dispersed recreation use.

Priority Actions:

1) **Develop a Regional Dispersed Recreation Program.**

a) Develop a concise definition for "dispersed recreation". Coordinate with the WO program leader to ensure consistency with on-going national efforts. Include recreational use of roads, trails, waterways, dispersed camp sites, and general forest areas.

b) Identify common Regional issues that pertain to the management of dispersed use. Examples include but are not limited to:

- natural and cultural resource impacts
- sanitation and safety
- appropriate "development levels" and development "creep"
- risks and risk mitigation (i.e., hazard trees)
- access and travel management implications and integration needs
- stay limits
- food storage (Bear Aware) requirements
- mixed and conflicting uses
- law enforcement
- visitor use and capacity (NVUM etc.)
- unintended consequences of site improvements (i.e. displacement of use and associated impacts, increased liability, etc.)
- Unintended consequences of requirements and/or actions of other program areas (signing to designate sites for administrative use, fire rings to mitigate fire risks, etc.)

c) Create management direction and guidance that addresses common issues. Draw from the R1 Dispersed Recreation Site Inventory data, NVUM data, unit, area, and corridor assessments, and field experience. Consider developing a Northern Region supplement to 2300 concerning dispersed recreation.

Measure: Dispersed Recreation direction and guidance is accessible and used.

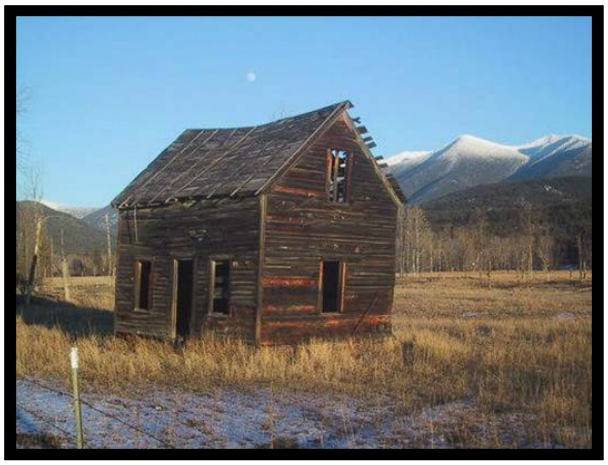
2) **Integrate the management and funding of dispersed recreation with other resource objectives and needs.** Examples include but are not limited to watershed restoration, implementation of travel management plans, fisheries improvements, CIP program/project goals, implementation of corridor management plans, etc.

Measure: # of funded projects (restoration, CIP, etc.) that include a dispersed recreation component.

3) **Develop public information and education that:**

- Uses social media (blogs, web sites, face book, twitter, etc.)
- Directs people to sites that can accommodate additional use
- Incorporates Leave No Trace messaging
- Includes more user-friendly maps
- Includes messaging that targets enforcement issues

Measures: Resource conditions at dispersed sites improve.
User conflicts (complaints) and law enforcement incidents decline.



Heritage Program

Goal: The Heritage Program is integral to the Region's niche and vision by increasing forest visitor understanding and appreciation of the Region's rich history and culture, while ensuring the protection and integrity of these unique and irreplaceable cultural resources for future generations.

Objectives:

- Protect and manage cultural resources as long-term assets.
- Provide opportunities to preserve, enhance, interpret and use cultural resources.
- Create balance between NHPA Section 106 (compliance) and Section 110 (stewardship) programs.
- Engage the public, partners, tribes and volunteers in management of cultural resources.

Priority Actions:

1) **Improve condition and trajectory of Historic Infrastructure (Built Environment)**
   a. Develop/use strategic plans to guide investment/management of historic infrastructure.
   b. Enhance collaboration among heritage, engineer and recreation programs in historic facilities management; better utilize existing tools (Infra, R1 building preservation plan, RFA).
   c. Increase rental fees, as appropriate; direct more fee receipts to work on historic facilities.
   d. Enlist preservation partners and "friends" groups help to restore and maintain historic buildings.
   e. Retain Historic Preservation Team (HPT); expand work range and capacity.
   f. Create programmatic agreements to facilitate NHPA building compliance (rec residences).

   Measures: # of strategic plans developed
   # and % of receipts directed to historic building O&M and improvements
   # of partnerships/friends groups
   # of building projects
   # of NHPA or related agreements

2) **Market Heritage resources** to improve program understanding/appreciation by agency employees and the American public.
   a. Create forest/regional marketing plans that are creative, relevant, and do-able.
   b. Coordinate marketing with other resource programs (recreation rental program).
   c. Expand/enhance heritage information through social media, web, educational trunks, etc.
   d. Develop heritage tourism opportunities that contribute to local communities & economies.
   e. Use MTDC and similar resources to develop marketing, and I&CE products.

   Measures: # of marketing plans developed
   # of media and outreach products
   # of preservation partners and collaborative products

3a) Develop and deliver Heritage Training:

a. Provide more historic preservation training for new line officers and employees.
b. Provide tribal consultation training in collaboration with the OTR program.
c. Provide cultural resource protection training in collaboration with LE&I.
d. Provide primitive tools/traditional skills training in fee and non-fee settings.
e. Invest and train in current, cost-savings technologies (GIS, Lidar, etc.).
f. Maintain heritage qualifications for wildfire and natural disaster recovery.

Measures: # and diversity of training courses provided
# of participants in training
# of trainees who actively participate in projects, wildfire etc.

3b) Increase Heritage Program Capacity

a. More fully integrate heritage with RHW programs (collaboration).
b. Create heritage staff "understory" and career ladder via Pathways, apprenticeships, etc.
c. Increase heritage staff and skill sharing across administrative boundaries.
d. Develop regional/forest succession plans as current heritage staff transfer or retire.
e. Seek ways to expedite NHPA Section 106 compliance (SHPO agreements, etc.).
f. Seek ways to better manage agency heritage collections (curation).
g. Integrate heritage into landscape planning as opportunities, not obstacles.
h. Increase volunteer and partner workforce (integrate with Focus Area 4 efforts)
i. Retain R1 Heritage Stewardship Enhancement (HSE) program and Historic Preservation Team.
j. Develop, enhance & nurture state, federal, non-profit, private, and tribal partnerships.
k. Train non-heritage employees to assist in cultural site identification.

Measures: # of integrated projects;
# of Pathways and PFT heritage personnel at the journey-level grades
# of NHPA agreements; # of volunteers
# of partnerships
% of work-sharing across administrative boundaries.

Interpretation and Conservation Education

Goal: Provide high quality, relevant Interpretive and Conservation Education (I&CE) opportunities that connect people to the rich heritage and natural resources of the Northern Region, and encourage visitors to discover, explore and gain an appreciation for these incredible resources.

Objectives:

- Raise the visibility and relevancy of the Region's I&CE programs and messaging as both an internal management tool, and as a tool to enhance RHW experiences and build community connections.
- Expand the current role and improve the quality of I&CE programs in the Region to better disseminate and inform the public on high priority issues and highlight/emphasize stewardship of unique resources and opportunities.
- Explore opportunities to cultivate funding for I&CE programs using multiple BLIs and leverage internal funding via partnerships to support priority projects that reach a large constituency.

Priority Actions:

1) **Update program delivery and make best use of new technologies to increase audience relevancy** in the areas of social media, web/internet presence, self-guided media using smart phones and other devices. Evaluate the balance of using attended media such as staffed programs and sites and non-personal, self-guided media in regards to funding, maintenance and visitor/audience experience and satisfaction. Collect and document visitor and community feedback on programs; use, develop simple evaluation tools to gauge audience satisfaction, quality of experiences.

   Measures: RHW information is available in multiple social media platforms
   Positive public feedback

2) **Improve existing and develop new internal and external partnerships.** Explore opportunities across functional program areas. The Region will define and develop consistent messages, brand and program delivery. I&CE programming is integrated in the management of the Region's natural and cultural resources. Programs and services are strategic, integrated, and focused on highest priority messages and audiences. (integrate with Focus Area # 4)

   Measures: # of new or expanded I&CE Partnerships
   # of program areas integrating I&CE to convey priority messages & benefits

3) **Elevate, integrate, and fund the Region's I&CE program.** I&CE should be a facet of almost every program area. A coordinated effort is needed to create a consistent and integrated approach to program development, funding opportunities, implementation, and accountability. Support programming and priority projects which align with specific management and operational objectives in annual work plans. Consider developing specific I&CE targets.

   Measures: Multiple program objectives are addressed in POW via I&CE
   Regional funding & target(s) include I&CE programming elements

Recreation Special Uses

Goal: To appropriately respond to applicants, permit holders and the needs of the American public; to manage recreation special uses so that public recreational needs are met and small business opportunities are provided while protecting our Region's natural resources.

Objectives:

- Deliver quality recreation services to the public in partnership with permit holders.
- Recognize and emulate efficiencies and focus on quality communications.

Priority Actions:

1) **Increase Work Capacity by pairing and sharing skills** across unit boundaries to focus specialized work in less people who either are, or can become, experts. This may include expanding the duties of the R1 Special Use **SWAT team** to include such tasks as completing/streamlining the annual bills for rec residences, resorts and organization camps. Specialized tasks may initially link priority specialized work with employees possessing the necessary skills sets to accomplish. As opportunities arise through attrition- adjustments to duties and the distribution of those duties may occur to respond to changing needs and create additional efficiencies.

   Measures: # of employees dedicated to specialized tasks across unit boundaries
   Increased # of permits administered to standard
   Decrease in expired uses that are still valid and occurring
   Increased accuracy of SUDS data
   Improved consistency across unit boundaries

2) **Establish focused teams** to address specific work, such as NEPA and outfitter-guide capacity analysis and needs assessments. Consider offering open seasons and lumping cases for NEPA and interdisciplinary team consideration on a monthly or quarterly basis to recognize efficiencies as opposed to dealing with NEPA on a case-by-case basis.

   Measures: # of employees dedicated to specialized tasks across unit boundaries
   Improved consistency across unit boundaries

3) **Offer additional training, tools, and networking** to address hot topics, policy updates, and practical solutions. Consider hosting region-wide conference calls on either a reoccurring (monthly or quarterly) basis, or as needed to ensure the lines of communication are open and interactive. Topics and call frequency will be designed to meet the needs of the field. In addition, calls will facilitate integration between units and peers, and an opportunity to share of ideas, challenges and solutions.

   Continue using and posting samples, templates and helpful tools on the R1 internal special use website. The field should actively share samples and tools for others to use.

Establish consistent timeframes/dates/seasons for permit requests (based on type and complexity). Better align public expectations with what our workforce capacity can realistically deliver; communicate this with public.

Engage leadership to ensure exposure and understanding of some of the fundamental policy and program issues. Consider presenting at the annual District Ranger meeting to address hot topics and cases/situations to watch out for, etc. Work to determine what is expected of FS Special Use practitioners in light of additional duties Realistic workload, timelines, priorities, etc)- communicate between leadership, frontliners, etc.

Measures: # of training opportunities
and diversity (i.e. line officers, etc.) of participants
Improved consistency across unit boundaries
Increased # of permits administered to standard

Scenery Resource

Goal: The incredible scenic resources of the Region are sustained and reflect healthy, resilient ecosystems to ensure: continued contributions to local, state and regional economies; an enhanced quality of life for residents; and exceptional destinations and recreation settings for visitors.

Objectives:

- Sustain the high quality scenic resources of the Region.
- Restore landscapes with low scenic integrity through integrated restoration activities.
- Shift from a focus of scenery being an obstacle and/or a resource requiring mitigation to one in which scenery is integral to developing sustainable solutions and outcomes.
- Better integrate cultural attributes with scenery management objectives and strategies.

Priority Actions:

1) **Training** was identified as the first action necessary in addressing multiple issues. By creating a common understanding of the interface between SMS concepts and our restoration focus, we will be better positioned to integrate scenery with on-going NFMA, NEPA, implementation, and monitoring priorities. The training will: focus on our new ecological context (beetles, fire, etc.); look beyond unit boundaries to better interface with communities, partners, and larger ecosystems; be consistent with FS policy, direction and guidance throughout the planning process; share existing tools and templates; and target multiple disciplines: silviculturists, planners, engineers, archeologists, line officers, and recreation professionals, as well as key partners.

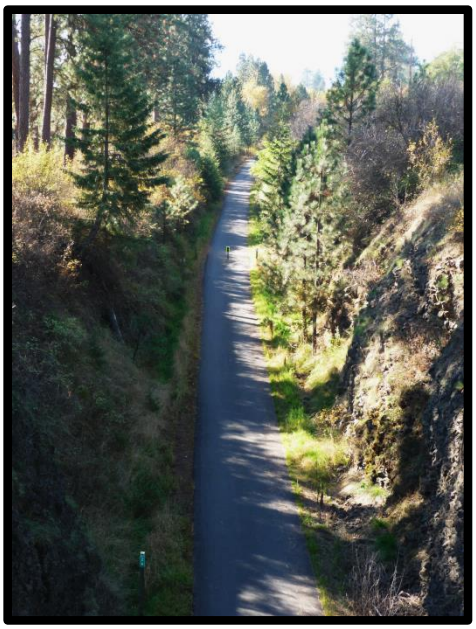
   Measures: # of training opportunities
   # and diversity of participants

2) **Integrate scenic resource objectives with those programs, initiatives and strategies that have agency momentum and support community goals.** Examples include: restoration, WUI projects, Climate Change Assessments and Adaptive Management Plans, implementation of the Farm Bill, land acquisitions, Treasured Landscapes, etc. At the Regional level, develop better Regional program direction and targets for scenic resources in budget narratives to include all aspects of program management (inventory, training, assessment, priority setting, monitoring). At the Regional, Forest and District levels, integrate scenic resources with NFMA efforts to identify opportunities to improve the scenic resources and in NEPA efforts to help define the Purpose and Need and *design* the proposed action.

   Measures: Program direction and targets included in budget narrative(s)
   # of NFMA and broad scale planning efforts that integrate scenic resources
   # of projects with Scenery included in purpose and need of NEPA projects

3) **Develop templates and share good examples** of NFMA, NEPA, and monitoring products. Posted on the Regional web site to serve as a reference library.

   Measure: # of templates and examples posted on the web



Trails

Goal: Provide a quality trail system that links day - use opportunities with local communities as well as maintaining access to more distant destinations and wildlands.

Objectives:

- The Region's trails system protects the natural and cultural resources of the Region.
- Skills are available to efficiently accomplish priority trails work across the Region.
- Trails provide connections with communities and link to the larger transportation system.

Priority Actions:

1) **Assess and right size** the Region's trail system through a consistent and systematic process which utilizes existing inventory data, and establishes criteria and tools by which individual units define their desired and sustainable trail system. The assessment will consider other transportation and travel management planning to ensure the trail system complements access to and through FS lands and provides linkages to surrounding communities and adjacent public lands.

   Measure: A sustainable trail system is identified across the Region.

2) **Train** Forest Service employees on how (best practices) to effectively work with and manage partners and volunteers. Ensure easy access to management tools via the Regional website. (integrate with Focus Area # 4)

   Measure: # of employees trained in managing partners and volunteers

3) **Share skilled employees and crews** across district and forest boundaries.

   Measure: # of employees working across district and forest boundaries

Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness

Goal:

The Region's designated and recommended Wilderness areas are preserved as an enduring resource for present and future generations.

Designated Wilderness Objectives:

- Preserve Wilderness Character by:
  - developing strong wilderness stewardship programs for each wilderness area;
  - engaging wilderness managers, interdisciplinary resource specialists, partners, and youth in stewardship activities.
- Implement national Wilderness Stewardship Performance measures (WSP), Wilderness Character Monitoring, and 2020 Vision.
- Monitor and correct conditions and trends leading to degradation of wilderness character and values.
- Assess proposed administrative actions involving prohibited uses that may affect wilderness character to ensure protection of wilderness character and values.
- Engage with industries developing new technologies and uses that may affect wilderness character.

Recommended Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas (WSA's) Objectives:

- Preserve wilderness character and values to retain potential for designation;
- Engage wilderness managers, interdisciplinary resource specialist, and partners in stewardship activities.
- Monitor and correct conditions and trends leading to degradation of wilderness character and values.

Priority Actions *(for designated Wilderness, recommended wilderness and WSA's):*

1) Seek integrated funding through multiple resource program budget line items (BLI's). Pursue partnerships, youth programs, and grant opportunities to complete implementation of Wilderness Stewardship Performance, Wilderness Character Monitoring, and 2020 Vision. Work priorities and monitoring will focus on preserving qualities and values in recommended wilderness and WSA's.

a) Create an integrated resource performance matrix, identifying where there is overlap with established goals, objectives, and targets across resource areas occurs within wilderness, recommended wilderness, WSA's.

b) Identify Budget Line Items (BLI's) that would be appropriate and have targets for work in wilderness, recommended wilderness, WSA's (i.e., weeds, watershed, fisheries, wildlife, etc). Develop a crosswalk showing how multiple objectives (WSP and other resource targets) can be accomplished utilizing those funds.

c) Identify opportunities with partners where youth could help achieve both 21CSC objectives and target accomplishments appropriate for the skill level and age groups via NFRW, CMTL, and other BLI's. (Integrate with Focus Area #4 efforts)

d) Identify and contact organizations with grant funding focused on engaging youth with the outdoors. Develop grant proposals for stewardship work in wilderness, recommended wilderness, WSA's. Review grant programs that have been successful in gaining larger corporate or philanthropy support that have engaged youth and/or partners with wilderness and look at regional opportunities to replicate or utilize portions of those models.

Measures: Amount of funding allocated through multiple BLI's and grants
# of partner and youth days performing wilderness and recommended wilderness stewardship work

2) Increase baseline integrated workforce

a. Increase baseline workforce to complete implementation of Wilderness Stewardship Performance, Wilderness Character Monitoring, and 2020 Vision; and to preserve qualities and values in recommended wilderness and WSA's.
   i. Allocate regional special emphasis funds for priority on-the-ground work for Wilderness Stewardship Performance. Consider funding one or two career ladder positions in the region focused on priority wilderness stewardship work.

b. Work with partners to develop a long term plan to reduce their dependence on FS appropriated funding, moving towards more of a 50:50 split or higher on the partner side (vs. 20% minimum match), where in turn the agency can redirect those appropriated dollars to fund seasonal and permanent positions. (Integrate with Focus Area #4 efforts)

c. Evaluate potential of personnel in other resource program areas to increase wilderness stewardship work, considering associated goals and targets and relative needs and priorities of work in wilderness, recommended wilderness, and WSA's.

d. Identify cross-training opportunities for district and forest personnel for basic tasks; Service First agreements with DOI agencies; sharing crews and/or partner liaisons across units

Measures: # career ladder positions established for wilderness stewardship work
Increased funding from other resource programs

3) Promote industry partnerships and educate the public on the use of new and emerging technologies. (Integrate with Focus Area #4 efforts)

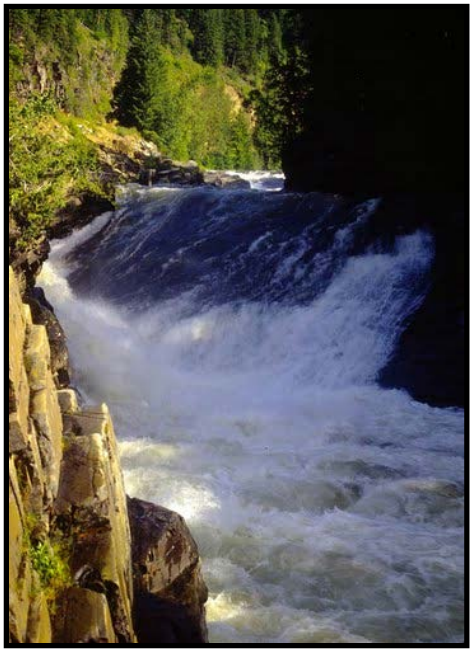
a. Work with the Fire and Aviation program to contact industry groups and partners to discuss how new uses and technologies can be managed in wilderness, recommended wilderness, and WSA's to preserve wilderness qualities and values (consider locations for use, best practices, other approaches). Coordinate with the Washington Office, other Regions, and Regional Law Enforcement.

c. Subscribe or track latest technology magazines and/or social media sites, to keep tabs on trends and changing technologies

d. Once management objectives and direction are established, effectively disseminate information to the public. Convey appropriate uses in and around wilderness; identify where appropriate places are located; and help guide people to the right places.

e. Attend organized group conference(s) to create a network of contacts within industry.

Measures: Relationships are established with industry partners.
Industry partners help convey where use is and isn't appropriate.



Wild and Scenic Rivers

Goal: The Region's designated Wild and Scenic Rivers (WSR's) are preserved in free-flowing condition and the Outstandingly Remarkable Values are protected. The eligibility of other rivers for WSR designation is determined; the values of eligible rivers are protected pending suitability study and designation. WSR's and eligible rivers are managed for continued public use and enjoyment consistent with protection and enhancement of river values.

Objectives:

- Comprehensive Resource Management Plans (CRMPs) are coordinated and completed to preserve free flowing characteristics and outstandingly remarkable values of designated Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- WSR's are managed for public use and enjoyment, and management actions are taken to correct conditions or trends leading to degradation of values.
- Eligibility for rivers and streams named on 7.5 minute USGS quads are completed
- There is public awareness of WSR's status and protections.

Priority Actions:

1) Develop an action plan for completing and updating CRMPs for each WSR in the Region

a. Gain Regional and Forest commitment.
b. Include language in regional budget narrative to communicate expectations and gain commitment from Forests to complete the action plans.
c. Contact other agencies with responsibilities and interest in CRMPs to engage them with CRMP action plans and schedule joint work on the CRMPs.
d. Evaluate whether any interim direction or actions are required to preserve outstandingly remarkable values prior to completion of CRMPs.

Measures: # of CRMP Action Plans completed and approved by Forests and Region.
Completion of Action Plans included in regional budget narrative
agencies/partners participating in CRMP development & implementation
of evaluations for interim direction or actions (prior to completion of CRMPs)

2) Conduct outreach with agencies, partners, outfitters-guides, and the public to discuss opportunities for their participation in stewardship and monitoring, and the importance and use of the fee retention program. Explore how existing authorities (FLREA, FERC, COE programs, others) and other funding sources can be used to fund WSR's planning and management. Develop Regional or Forest web-based clearinghouse for information on WSR's and schedule and progress of CRMPs. (Integrate with Focus Area #4 efforts)

Measures: # of contacts made
# of new funding sources identified
# of Web sites established for WSR's

3) Contact and engage multiple Forest Service resource programs involved with wild and scenic rivers management. Discuss roles, responsibilities, CRMP action plans, and funding opportunities to complete stewardship and monitoring activities.

Measures: # of contacts made
# of new funding sources identified

The following tables display: priority actions contained in this strategy (the **WHAT**); which FY quarter(s) the actions will be implemented (the **WHEN**); and **WHO** (**RO with core unit representatives** , **Units** **or** **RO w/ all Units**) will do the work. The first table lists actions under each of the 4 Focus areas (reference page 9-16). Subsequent tables list actions specific to each of the nine RHW program areas (reference pages 17-30). Of the priorities listed, the top eight are for completion in FY 2016 and 2017.

RO w/core Unit reps.	UNITs	RO w/all Units	IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE					
			FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
FOCUS AREAS	**1) Identity & Visibility**							
	Internal communication plan							
	External communication plan							
	2) Prioritizing Integrating and Funding Work							
	Annually define out-year priorities that integrate RHW programs with one another.							
	Integrate RHW program priorities with other resource programs & reflect in out-year Budget		*WO NFRR Reply Due*					
	Complete existing data priorities							
	Conduct a Data needs assessment							
	3) Workforce							
	Workforce assessment							
	Recruitment strategy							
	Integrated training development/mentoring							
	4) Partnerships, Volunteers and Youth							
	Assess existing partnerships							
	Develop partnership strategy							
	Develop tools/BMPs for the field							

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE *(continued)*

PROGRAM – SPECIFIC ACTIONS

RO w/core unit reps.	UNIT(s)	RO w/ all UNITs	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Developed Recreation								
Develop regional fee strategy								
Update and/or adopt RFA actions								
Implement fee proposals and identify CIP Priorities.								
Dispersed Recreation								
Develop a R1 Dispersed Recreation Program								
Integrate funding and management								
Develop Focused and consistent public info.			See Focus Area #1 above (F1)					
Heritage								
Develop strategy to improve historic infrastructure								
Develop marketing plans								
Develop & deliver R1 training			See F3					
Increase heritage program capacity			See F3					
Interpretation & Conservation Education								
Update program delivery systems			See F3					
Prioritize old & new partnerships			See F4					
Elevate/integrate I&CE program & messaging			See F1					
Recreation Special Uses								
Increase work capacity by pairing/sharing								
Establish specialized R1 teams								
Develop training/tools			See F3					
Scenic Resources								
Develop regional training			See F3					
Develop integrated direction & targets			See F2					
Develop easily accessed templates/tools			See F3					

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE (continued)

PROGRAM – SPECIFIC ACTIONS

RO w/ core unit reps.	UNIT(s)	RO w/ all UNITs	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20
Trails								
Develop assessment/right sizing process								
Develop training and best practices relating to partnerships			See F4					
Zone / share skills across boundaries								
Wilderness / recommended wilderness								
Seek integrated funding								
Increase workforce								
Target partnerships			See F4					
Wild and Scenic Rivers								
Develop R1 action plan for CRMPs								
Develop stewardship/monitoring partnerships			See F4					
Garner support and funding from other resources areas for integrated CRMPs								

APPENDICES

A. Strategy Development Process
B. Issues that Drove Development of 4 Focus Area
C. Program-Specific Issues and Additional Actions for later consideration
D. Context and Linkages to other National and Regional Guidance
E. References
F. Communication Plans *(to be added later)*

A. Strategy Development Process

Introduction and Need for R1 RHW Strategy - RLC (October 2014)

Strategy Workshop (December 2014)

- We've **defined** an integrated Regional RHW **vision (started BIG)**
- We've **aligned** our programs with that vision: **(BROKE into manageable pieces)**
  - defined Program-specific goals and objectives,
  - identified issues that needed to be overcome to achieve our goals, and
  - outlined priority actions to address issues and move us toward our goa/objs.

Shared Draft products (Vision, common themes, program issues, goals/objectives/actions actions) from Workshop with all participants and RLC (January 2014)

Integration, outreach to partners & product refinement (February-March, 2015)

Development of Focus Areas - RHW VTC (March 2-3, 2015)

- Began to integrate program needs by identifying common issues and actions within each of the program areas.
- We asked ourselves:

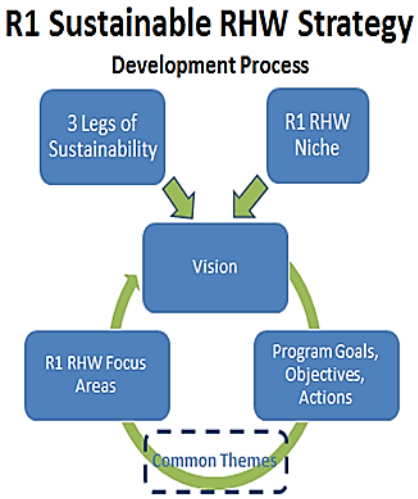
What can we do collectively to achieve the key needs that cross program areas?

What are the best Platforms to improve ALL RHW programs?

Where is the biggest bang for our buck @ the Regional scale to ensure sustainability?

- We also reviewed the "common themes" identified in the December workshop. We felt many of the common themes are really a mix of things: FROM specific strategies (fee retention, right sizing, partnerships, and integration) TO desired outcomes (capacity).

- In addition, we reviewed our original need for developing a Sustainable Regional RHW Strategy: to address concurrent trajectories: increases in use, deferred maintenance, workloads, and work complexity; while facing declines in: budget, workforce, and skills.



Looking at the vision, common themes, and program specific goals/objs/actions - we identified FOUR overarching areas of focus that seemed to touch each of the program areas:

1) Program Identify and Visibility
2) Prioritizing and integrating Work
3) Workforce
4) Partnerships

The following list shows how the common themes were nested in each of the Focus Areas:

1) RHW Program Identity & Visibility (internally and externally) links to common themes:
- Marketing and communication (strategy)
- Partnerships (strategy)
- Capacity (end result)

2) Integrating and Prioritizing Work
- Capacity (end result)
- Right sizing infrastructure (strategy)
- Fee retention (strategy)
- Integrating program planning and delivery (strategy)

3) Workforce links to original common themes:
- Capacity (end result)
- Right sizing (strategy)
- Partnerships (strategy)

4) Partnerships – a common theme across all program area actions

Draft products (Focus Areas) to participants and RLC (April 2015)

Draft Strategy to RHW participants (June 8th, 2015)

VTC with RHW to refine and edit Draft (June 16th, 2015)

Final Draft to RHW and RLC (June 22nd, 2015)

Presentation/discussion of Final Draft @ RLC meeting (July 9, 2015)

Additional review and comments to RHW Director (by July 25, 2015)

Presentation of Final @ August 2015 RLC meeting

B. Issues that Drove the Development of the 4 Focus Areas

This appendix captures discussions from the April, 2015 meeting/VTC with Regional and unit RHW staff. The objective of the meeting was to discuss issues associated with each of the four areas of focus. The list of issues was later condensed and used in developing the over-arching issue statement (why), goal & objectives (what), and priority actions (how) for each of the focus areas (described on pages 9-16).

1) Identity & Visibility- Driving Issues

- RHW doesn't receive priority or equal recognition through planning processes or when making management decisions; need to have a strong voice and consistent message 'at the table'.
- There is an apparent disconnect between rhetoric and reality- message to public does not always match on-the-ground conditions.
- RHW program value and benefits are not well defined, quantified, or conveyed**.**
- USFS tend to focus on, and view recreation only as related infrastructure; however, there are so many other aspects and level of complexity in what RHW does. *Not anyone* can do recreation.
- Internally at all levels (Regional, Forest, and District) don't understand the links between programs (within RHW and RHW with other resource programs).
- RHW targets and measures don't reflect important aspects of quality RHW program delivery – need meaningful measures that result in sustainable recreation programs.
- RHW targets are considered secondary to other resource targets (i.e. timber, etc.)
- Northern Region's visitor centers are not considered priority even though they reach thousands of visitors, significantly more than almost any other resource or opportunity.
- RHW practitioners are good at finding issues and not so good at following through and fixing them (i.e. implementing RFA)
- National messaging often misses RHW benefits; even though they far outweigh economic, social benefits of other multiple uses and are how most people interact with the forest.
- The USFS is in the midst of change and our relevancy is slipping. As mentioned before, RHW is how most of the public interacts with the USFS- our programs and messaging need to be relevant.
- Public often USFS with all other public lands, especially RHW programs and opportunities.
- Public and partners are often more effective in influencing internal change- need to build constituency and advocacy for our programs.

2) Prioritizing and Integrating Work – Driving Issues

- There is a need to integrate among individual RHW programs;
- There is a need to integrate RHW programs with other program areas (veg, wildlife, roads, etc.);
- Our work is typically not multi-funded (integrated funding) despite programs such as Wilderness that are land (as opposed to single resource) based and address multiple resource needs and benefits;
- Our focus is on continuing historic O&M rather than taking a strategic look at what we should be doing to ensure long term sustainability;
- We focus on NEPA workloads and don't recognize, identify, or integrate other critical work;
- NEPA projects typically do not include RHW needs during NFMA or in the development of the proposed action. Instead, RHW are typically viewed as subordinate programs, requiring mitigation;
- NFRW funding (at all levels of the organization) is inadequate and an indication of the relative importance when compared to other agency programs and priorities' and
- National and Regional targets point to board feet and restoration – NOT recreation.

3) Workforce – Driving Issues:

- The need for trained, qualified RHW professionals is undervalued or unrecognized.
- Opportunities to create journey-level "understory" and career ladders are limited.
- Many of our former PFT GS-5/7/9 positions are now being filled with seasonal hires.
- Pathways students are often placed out of region for lack of available PFT positions and due the perceived long-term funding and FTE risk.
- Mentoring of new RHW employees is inadequate due, in part, to supervision by "super staff" unfamiliar with the RHW work requirements or workload.
- The number of training RMH (short) courses has diminished, and core competencies are being lost (outside of Northern Region University and preservation team training).
- The FS E-Tracker and Regional hiring system puts low priority on RHW seasonal employees, although they are a critical workforce (i.e., placing RHW is in Regional group priority 3).
- All of the above contributes to a self-fulfilling perception of lower priority or marginal programs, in contrast to o more fully staffed, "mainstream" (biophysical) programs producing bona fide widgets.

4) Partnerships – Driving Issues:

- We don't tell the story (quantify) the benefits obtained from existing partnerships
- Although there are 334 different entities involved in our Partnerships, it is unclear if we have the right ones doing the right work?
- Partnerships are sometimes perceived as a replacement of (in lieu of) a skilled and dedicated FS workforce.
- Workforce skills are not always aligned with what's needed to manage partnerships – we are often trained (and motivated) as "doers" as opposed to "facilitators".
- There is untapped potential to better connect with local citizens – i.e. can provide jobs, experience, and career opportunities for local citizens
- Need to increase our workforce capacity to better manage and potentially expand upon existing partnerships.
- Partnerships need to focus on building a constituency.
- There are opportunities to grow a broader conservation ethic with our public.
- We don't recognize or celebrate our accomplishments - Many units are already doing what we're saying needs to be done.
- Not all units have the same capability – consider when developing measures
- We need to take a close look at cost effectiveness – may cost us more than hiring our own…
- RHW already accounts for 84% of our Region's Volunteers, Youth & Partnerships
- Matching funding not consistent or predictable…
- "Sharing" may be perceived as taking from a unit's key partnerships
- Many of partners are struggling – difficult to respond to our ebbs and flows
- Existing partnerships issues: our capacity and capacity of our partners
- There is an internal aversion to taking on more partners (overload)

C. Program-Specific Issues and Additional Actions

This appendix captures discussions from the December 2014 workshop and work to identify program specific issues. In addition, it captures actions identified but not prioritized as in the top three.

Developed Recreation Program

Issues:

- Current funding and workforce is unable to sustainably manage existing developed recreation sites and associated infrastructure, facilities, and even routine maintenance.
- The deferred maintenance backlog continues to balloon rapidly; accentuated by the loss of CMFC CIP funding, until approximately 2019- which was critical in addressing these issues.
- The budgets and ageing facilities continue to decline while use and demand continue to increase.
- Current fees throughout the Region are drastically outdated and constitute some of the lowest in the Nation. Many sites that are eligible as fee sites are not in the system due to the inability over many years to implement change. This has resulted in a significant loss of revenue to maintain and improve these sites and work toward a more sustainable program.
- Additional issues are centered on the lack of marketing, both in what we offer, and how the fees are critical to maintaining/improving facilities for continued enjoyment by the public.

Additional Actions identified:

- **Market** fee sites and associated benefits of the program to the public.
- **Develop additional partnerships** at sites with high public interest and demand for long-term maintenance and upkeep. (linked to Focus Area #4)
- **Return partial funding to the Recreation CIP program** by sharing the cost burden across multiple BLIs until the completion of building 26.
- **Vegetation Management Planning** associated with developed recreation sites; look for opportunities to fund process and carrying out recommendations. Integrate treatment needs with Regional Restoration strategy and other veg planning efforts.
- **Emphasize and highlight special places, opportunities and trails**- Region 1 several iconic recreation sites, visitor centers, National Scenic and Historic Trails and backcountry opportunities. RHW needs to work to advertise and capitalize on these assets, across all program areas.
- **Manage sites and marketing efforts to shift use to other, less used sites** – some site receive intense use while other are operated well below capacity. Explore ways to better distribute use.

- **Update developed recreation sites and associated amenities** to better accommodate use, reflect the desired development scale, and facilitate sustainable management.
- **Address capacity to meet demand** Consider recreation and use trends to help keep the USFS both relevant with changing demographics as well as provide new revenue sources that can support the broader program as a whole.
- **"No partner = No Potty" concept**
- **Large-scale (Forest or even regional) toilet cleaning & pumping contracts**
- **Look for sponsorship/'adopt-a-site' partnerships**
- **Develop quality internal & external partnerships. Consider which resources (natural and cultural) benefit from maintenance and management of sites.** Explore opportunities with external organizations and other funding sources (i.e. NFRR-stewardship contracts, resource protection efforts associated with Rec developments, and fee retention from other sources). (linked to Focus Area #4)
- **Continued refinement of Regional CIP** criteria to address deferred maintenance needs and coordination with Engineering to secure necessary roads dollars.
- **Pre-planning effort on CIP proposals throughout the Region** to prepare and best position Forests for funding opportunities. Work to better coordinate regional process on CIP proposals.
- **Coordinated effort and support from Line Officers, Front-liners, staffs, etc.** to change current maintenance and management of developed recreation sites. Say "no" to non-priority work when not financially feasible; reducing amenities; less frequent cleaning schedules; etc.
- **Streamline, improve, and fund efforts to decommission sites where appropriate** to reduce maintenance burdens and deferred maintenance backlogs.
- **Explore better accomplishment target for developed recreation** to more accurately depict the work that is accomplished.
- **Continue to improve accessibility at developed recreation sites**
- **Continue to focus RSI funding on cabin rental opportunities** that also highlight heritage resources. Also consider high capacity campground water systems, improvements that reduce O&M costs, and/or facilitate operation by concessionaires or other partners.
- **Continued RFA implementation & annual updates** to ensure responsiveness to changed conditions.
- **Continued efforts to make improvements and accomplish O&M through partners**
- **Complete INFRA inventories of Interpretive facilities not already captured in the database**
- **Investigate opportunities for improving interpretive opportunities** along primary travel corridors and key destinations to support a cohesive geo-tourism program
- **Re-energize National Forest Scenic Byway program** by facilitating stronger support by communities and tourism partners
- **Continued coordination with State/BLM RRACs**

Dispersed Recreation Program:

Issues:

- Despite accounting for the majority of use and resource damage in the Northern Region, low priority (as evidenced in work plans and funding) is given to dispersed recreation management.
- There is no up-to-date National or Regional direction for dispersed recreation management.
- Current guidance must be extrapolated from developed recreation standards and guidelines which are not always relevant or helpful in addressing needs.
- There currently are no standards for dispersed recreation management, except for some key measures in the National Quality Standards (health and cleanliness, safety and security, resource setting) which have some application to dispersed recreation management.
- There is inadequate FS field presence to manage dispersed use and resulting resource damage.
- There is a lack of accessible visitor information.
- There is a lack of direction, guidance, money and capacity to manage dispersed recreation.
- Additional issues related to the management of dispersed use include: travel planning – including subpart C, enforcement issues, loss of access, and development creep.

Additional Actions:

- **Complete Travel Planning –** including Sub-part C (Winter Travel Planning)
- **Integrate** dispersed recreation inventory and non-system roads and trails with restoration planning and implementation
- **RHW professionals engage in Open Space Strategy** to ensure key access is maintained and scenic and heritage resources are protected.
- **Implement Travel Plans.** Develop budget direction to better focus and integrate with other fund codes (roads, trails, wildlife, watershed, etc.)
- **Integrate dispersed recreation management with Forest Plan revisions.** Utilize both ROS and site inventories. Address dispersed recreation issues that go beyond travel management such as: extreme sports, dispersed camping, hunting, etc. Facilitate collaboration between user groups and among resource specialists.
- **Evaluate public safety and liability issues** related to dispersed recreation (such as hazard trees affecting dispersed camp sites) and include those considerations in the development of regional direction for dispersed recreation management.

Heritage Program:

Issues:

- Historic infrastructure is in various states of preservation and management conditions. This is partially due to an internal lack of strategic planning and integration among the heritage, facilities, and recreation programs.

- There is a lack of information and marketing to facilitate public appreciation and enjoyment of the Region's cultural resources.
- Project compliance and NEPA planning take priority over cultural resource protection and stewardship.
- There is a lack of heritage training.
- The capacity of our skilled professional and technician workforce is diminishing.

Additional Actions:

- Develop forest-grassland heritage program plans that incorporate RHW integrated strategy goals and objectives.
- Develop annual unit programs of work that balance heritage compliance and stewardship.
- Include heritage program work on annual POWs to enable heritage programs to meet targets, the national performance measure, upward reporting, and federal auditing requirements.
- Incorporate heritage objectives into other resource program plans and projects, including landscape restoration, facilities right-sizing and travel management to maximize funding and work opportunity.
- Maximize care and tending (invest in) of the heritage database (NRM) to assist in project planning, program analyses, and upward reporting (i.e., Heritage Program Managed to Standard).

Interpretation and Conservation Education Program:

Issues:

- Some of the Region's programs and services lack relevancy to communities and visitors. I&CE is not being used as a tool to help convey the benefits being provided and building that relevancy.
- There is inadequate capacity to accomplish the substantial workload associated with the development and implementation of quality I&CE programs and services. Everything from program development, recognition, visibility, funding, partnership cultivation and maintenance, delivery, and marketing require dedicated leadership, skills, and funding.
- The low priority (internal relevancy) and lack of targeted funding given to I&CE services and programs limits program delivery, quality, and capacity.

Additional Actions:

- **Highlight the significant natural and cultural resources and programs** of the Northern Region that are of high interest to management, communities, and visitors. Work with the appropriate functional areas and units to identify significant resources and sites and develop key messages and themes. Engage community partners to help identify and develop I&CE program messages and products. Recognize that I&CE programs can be a management tool to: influence human behavior that is causing resource impacts; and build an informed constituency that supports public lands.

Measures: # of I&CE products developed with communities and partners
Improved resource conditions in specified problem areas
Multiple program areas are actively involved in I&CE planning and program delivery

- **Coordinate & prioritize program delivery-** including front-liners, fire prevention, FPOs, LEI, hire seasonal interpreters, hosts, etc. (i.e. fire needs to be responsible for the Smokey program; every resource area needs to have an integrated program and possibly assigned program targets)
- **Consider alternate funding scheme of large Visitor/Interpretive centers**- major financial burden on overall Recreation program that diverts appropriated funding away from other Recreation programs. This includes consideration of divesting the Region from management and financing of major visitor/interpretive centers.
- **Increase training and communication within agency and region-** including supporting regional support to units for improving electronic media information delivery. Create a web-based 'warehouse' in order to link programs/resources, examples, training opportunities, etc.
- **Consider re-naming program and combine and improve program delivery**
- **Engage and work with** adjacent land managers, states and partners to develop cohesive and relevant I & CE opportunities for visitors. Expand/improve marketing, partner in both management and marketing efforts. This includes, but is not limited to State Parks and Tourism offices, NPS & BLM.
- **Focus the delivery of I&CE programs at visitor centers**. Broaden the range of partners who benefit from these facilities. Develop interdisciplinary involvement in the use of visitor centers as centers of excellence for public engagement in resource management.
- **Integrate I&CE emphasis into Regional budget direction** as well as accountability measures. Integrate all resources and functional areas & funding sources to provide interpretive opportunities.
- **I&CE program delivery will include** the use of the internet, permittees such as outfitter/guides, and new technologies such as pod casts and GPS Rangers to better reach target audiences.
- **Remember our motto-** Our agency is overly focused on "caring for the land" and often forget to "serve the people" (at least as it is portrayed to the public).
- **Ensure management is effectively conveying needs to elected officials-** Explore tactics to 'wave our flag' to increase awareness of needs to support I&CE programming.

Recreation Special Uses Program:

Issues:

- Declining funding and focus to adequately address rec special uses.
- There is a lack of capacity to address new uses and administer existing uses.
- Skilled staffs either have left or are soon to retire and there is little to no succession planning

- Limited technical knowledge in the field to address specialized uses
- Inconsistent program administration across unit boundaries
- Lack of line officer understanding of policy and their decision space
- Too much NEPA and specialist time expended for low risk cases
- The Special Use Database System (SUDS) and interface with FMMI is complex and frustrating to use.

Additional Actions identified:

- Develop a new **Programmatic Agreement** with the **Montana SHPO** to streamline how the Forest Service responds to rec residence proposals for **exterior cabin improvements.**
- Update and finalize the **Outfitter – Guide "Administrator Guidebook"**.
- Update regional policy direction and user guides when the need and opportunities arise. *(Note: Several Regional Directives were updated in March, 2015)*
- Draft and publish a user guide for how to deal with **hazard trees** in permit areas (rec res, ski areas, campground concessionaires, resorts, etc.)
- Assist with national efforts to get fee retention authority, update SUDS, and redesign the external rec special uses web page

Scenery Resource Program:

Issues:

- There is a lack of scenery resource understanding.
- There is minimal to no agency focus.
- Current skills and capacity are inadequate to cover work load.
- No BLI or targets are associated with scenic resources workload.
- Additional issues revolved around: work planning, implementation, and monitoring. The issues are inter-related and are resulting in on-the-ground conditions that are not aligned with Forest Plan direction.
- Our implementation does not always reflect what we said we would do in our NEPA decision.

Additional Actions identified:

- **Investigate opportunities to better quantify the economic benefits of scenery.** Work with Regional Economist and contractors (i.e. Headwaters) to expand on the FS IMPLAN model.
- **Work more closely with communities and local tourism industry** to integrate the scenic values of FS system lands with local planning efforts, as well as tourism and marketing efforts. (Integrate with Focus Area # 4)
- Continue to **establish direction for scenic resources in plan revisions** and engage the public in helping define desired conditions and objectives for the scenic resources.
- **Continue to implement the Regional LA zoning decision and create additional "LA sharing" avenues** (MOAs, interdisciplinary recruitment, work planning templates, university contacts, enterprise team professionals, etc.).

- **Work with communities to re-energize Scenic Byways and National Scenic Trail programs.** Create a better understanding of the social, economic and ecological benefits of our scenic corridors and establish long-lasting partnerships to help advocate for the protection and enhancement of the Region's incredible scenic resources.
- **Resurrect the Built Environment Image Guide (BEIG) and Vegetation Management in Developed Sites Training.** Both tools are critical in providing quality, sustainable settings for those recreating in our developed recreation sites.
- **Conduct implementation and effectiveness monitoring – integrate with Regional IM&A**

Trails Program:

Issues:

- The Region has more trails infrastructure than units are able to maintain or manage (reference the GAO report).
- We have inadequate capacity and skills to nurture and/or expand upon existing volunteer and partnerships necessary in maintaining our trail system to standard.
- There has been a steady decline in the traditional skill sets (including those necessary for our stock programs) of FS employees.

Additional Actions:

- Seek and secure integrated funding (multiple BLIs) and leverage via partnerships (linked to Focus Area #4)
- Increase baseline integrated workforce Consider funding one or two career ladder positions in the region focused on reporting accomplishments and data base management.

Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness Programs:

Issues:

- Current workforce and funding capacity may limit stewardship and monitoring necessary to preserve wilderness character and values. Current engagement and support of interdisciplinary programs is insufficient for successful stewardship and monitoring.
- Emerging new uses and technologies may degrade wilderness character and values.

Additional Actions:

- **Develop R1 Integrated Strategy Approach for Wilderness Initiatives**
    - Develop regional strategies for completing Wilderness Stewardship Performance, Wilderness Character Monitoring, 2020 Vision implementation with emphasis on interdisciplinary involvement and funding.
- **Develop implementation Schedules for Wilderness Initiatives**
    - Implementation of Wilderness Stewardship Performance, Wilderness Character Monitoring, and 2020 Vision.

- **Develop R1 Strategy for Strengthening Consistent Use of MRDG process**
    - Complete Minimum Requirements Decision Guide analyses for all proposed actions potentially affecting wilderness character in designated wilderness.
    - Conduct Line Officer and field program manager training on MRDG analysis process
- **Develop R1 Strategy for Strengthening Protection of Wilderness Character in areas recommended or studied (WSAs) for future wilderness designation.**

Wild and Scenic Rivers Program:

Issues:

- CRMPs are outdated and do not reflect current use and management issues.
- Completion of CRMPs are complex and long term projects that are difficult to complete at the Forest level given Forest priorities and capacity.
- Eligibility study is not complete for rivers across the region.
- Current workforce and funding (capacity) is inadequate to complete planning, monitoring, and stewardship activities to preserve outstandingly remarkable values for designated WSR's and eligible rivers.
- Current engagement and support of Forest Service interdisciplinary programs and funding is insufficient for planning, monitoring, and stewardship of designated and eligible rivers.

Additional Actions:

- Complete eligibility studies of rivers named on 7.5 minute USGS quads as a part of Forest Plan Revision or as other opportunities emerge.
- Refresh existing Suitability Studies that have not been forwarded to Congress for action. Determine whether those studies are still valid and recommended decisions relevant.

D. Context and Linkages to broader National and Regional Direction and Guidance

- ***2015-2020 DRAFT FS Strategic Plan (May, 2015)***
  The FS Strategic Plan contains Goals and Objectives for the agency to strive for over the next 5 years. To ensure relevancy and compatibility with broader agency direction, the 4 focus areas of the R1 Sustainable RHW Strategy were cross referenced with the agency's strategy (reference the table on the following page).

- ***National Sustainable Recreation Framework (2010)***
  The Framework's Vision and Guiding Principles were used to develop the Region's RHW Vision, Focus Areas, and Program-specific Goals.

- ***2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR Part 219) & 1900 directives (January, 2015)***
  The definition of "Sustainable Recreation" and 3 components (economic, social, and ecological) of "Sustainability" were integrated with the R1 Sustainable RHW Strategy's Vision, Focus Areas, and Program-specific Goals/Objectives.

- ***The Northern Region RHW Niche (2008)***
  The Region's Niche was foundational in developing the overall RHW Vision, Focus Areas, and Program-specific Goals

		FS STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020											
		Strategic GOAL 1 Sustain Our Nation's NFs & Grasslands			Strategic GOAL 2 Deliver Benefits to the Public			Strategic GOAL 3 Apply Knowledge Globally			Mgmt. GOAL Excel as a High Performing Agency		
		Obj. A Resilient adaptive Ecosyst.	Obj. B Mitigate Wildfire risk	Obj. C Conserve Open Space	Obj. D Provide Abund-ant Water	Obj. E Strength-en commun-ities	Obj. F Connect people to outdoors	Obj. G Advance know-ledge	Obj. H Transfer tech. & apps.	Obj. I Exchange natural resource expertise	Obj. A Recruit diverse work-force	Obj. B Promote inclusive culture	Obj. C Attract & retain top empl.
R1 SUSTAINABLE RHW STRATEGY	Focus 1 Identity Visibility												
	Focus 2 Work Integration												
	Focus 3 Workforce												
	Focus 4 Partner-ships												

E. References

The Outdoor Industry Association 2012 Report http://outdoorindustry.org/pdf/OIA_OutdoorRecEconomyReport2012.pdf

2012 FICOR Report http://www.southernregion.fs.fed.us/research/docs/outdoor-recreation/recreation-economy.pdf

2012 Planning Rule (36 CFR 219.19) http://www.fs.usda.gov/planningrule

FS National Visitor Use Monitoring (NVUM) Reports http://apps.fs.fed.us/nrm/nvum/index.htm

USDA FS Strategic Plan: FY 2015-2020 http://www.fs.fed.us/strategicplan

USDA FS, *A Sustainable Recreation Future*, July 29, 2014 Draft

USDA, FS *Framework for Sustainable Recreation*, June 25, 2010

NFS Economics Web Site, 2012 Data, Susan Winter: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/economic_contribution/index.shtml

USDA FS Recreation Integrated Business Service Center web site: http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/rhwr/ibsc

USDA FS NRM INFRA Reports

The Northern Region Niche statement and supporting information: http://www.fs.usda.gov/main/r1/recreation

R1 RHW intranet site http://fsweb.r1.fs.fed.us/recreation/rmlhw_index.shtml

R1 Geospatial Library http://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/r1/landmanagement/gis/?cid=stelprdb5297557&width=full